

Memory and Repetition

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Abstract

The themes of memory and repetition appeared as a part of the Architecture and Discourse territory of investigation of Master of Science in Advanced Architectural Design Program at Cornell University. The described ideas were formulated during 2018-2019 academic year and they are supported by three selected projects from project studio and elective courses.

The term “memory” is considered in the text from different perspectives and interpretations. Thus, one of them has become: memory as a base for creating something new. Inevitably we use our knowledge and experience for the process of creation and I believe we can trust our memories but it is crucial to try to control them and be selective. The personal experience is valuable not only in terms of personal investigations but also because it influences the collective understanding a lot. This idea brings us to the second point that personal memory makes the “public memory” subjective. Moreover, even the creation of an archive as collection of documents is subjective. The institution or the person who collects records and artifacts gives voice to an archive. The solution which can help get closer to the real meaning for the interpretation of these records is to return repetitively to the source and go deeper every time.

This repetition could be used not only in terms of returning to the theoretical source but also in the use of mechanical reproduction as a method of exploration, interpretation, translation and creation of iterations. Both methods that I am describing, exploration through memory and repetition, address the potential of the past to create the future. Repeated access to memory, to the same sources, and hand-made repetition can bring new results every time.

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Memory and Repetition

The themes of memory and repetition as a method have become the main threads of the discussions that went through the whole academic year. I chose the Architecture and Discourse territory of investigation because I was interested in professional dialogues with architects who create architectural agendas themselves not only through designing architectural artifacts but also through their theoretical pursuits. Such discussions greatly influenced my way of thinking.

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The articulation of the method of using memory as a tool for design makes clear that everything we do is very subjective. However, memory saves the strongest impressions – we can rely on it. This theory was used during the Fall 2018 project studio by Manuel Aires Mateus and Rodolfo Dias. The richness of personal experience is a valuable source for thinking about architecture especially in the investigations of human interactions with living spaces.

The project has become a solution for the reflection Architecture as a definition of memory, upon Architecture as a possibility of intervention, upon Architecture as an opportunity of transformation. The first phase of it was dedicated to collection of memories about spaces from our life and even from childhood. The experience of our own interaction with them has become extremely important for creating a new special scenario of the project. The interweaving of memories and impressions from

the city of Lisbon have become the base for the project of the house. The whole idea was formulated in one simple sentence built on contradictions: "The hidden Villa which is modest outside and rich inside, which is excavated and full of light". The collections of spaces in the Villa is a sculpture and I believe that the experience is both: a journey and isolated moments at the same time. Each space is different, each of them has its' own story. However, the relationships between them are not less important. The motion between spaces is inevitable and it is different from exploring each space; the connection of spaces is a crucial part of the scenario as well as each room itself.

The subjective experience is valuable not only in terms of personal investigations but also because it influences the collective understanding a lot. I always believed that archive as a collection of facts is an absolute as a knowledge storage and only the way people interpret facts is the point when history is becoming subjective. However, the course in Spring 2019, called "Practicum: Tell Me About Your Archive" by Samia Henni, and conversations with architectural theorists have changed my attitude toward the archive and my understanding of this phenomenon of collecting things dramatically. For me, the archive has become not just the voiceless collection of documents and facts but the powerful historical instrument, as well as the lack of an archive is a significant phenomenon that itself influence the interpretation of a fact.

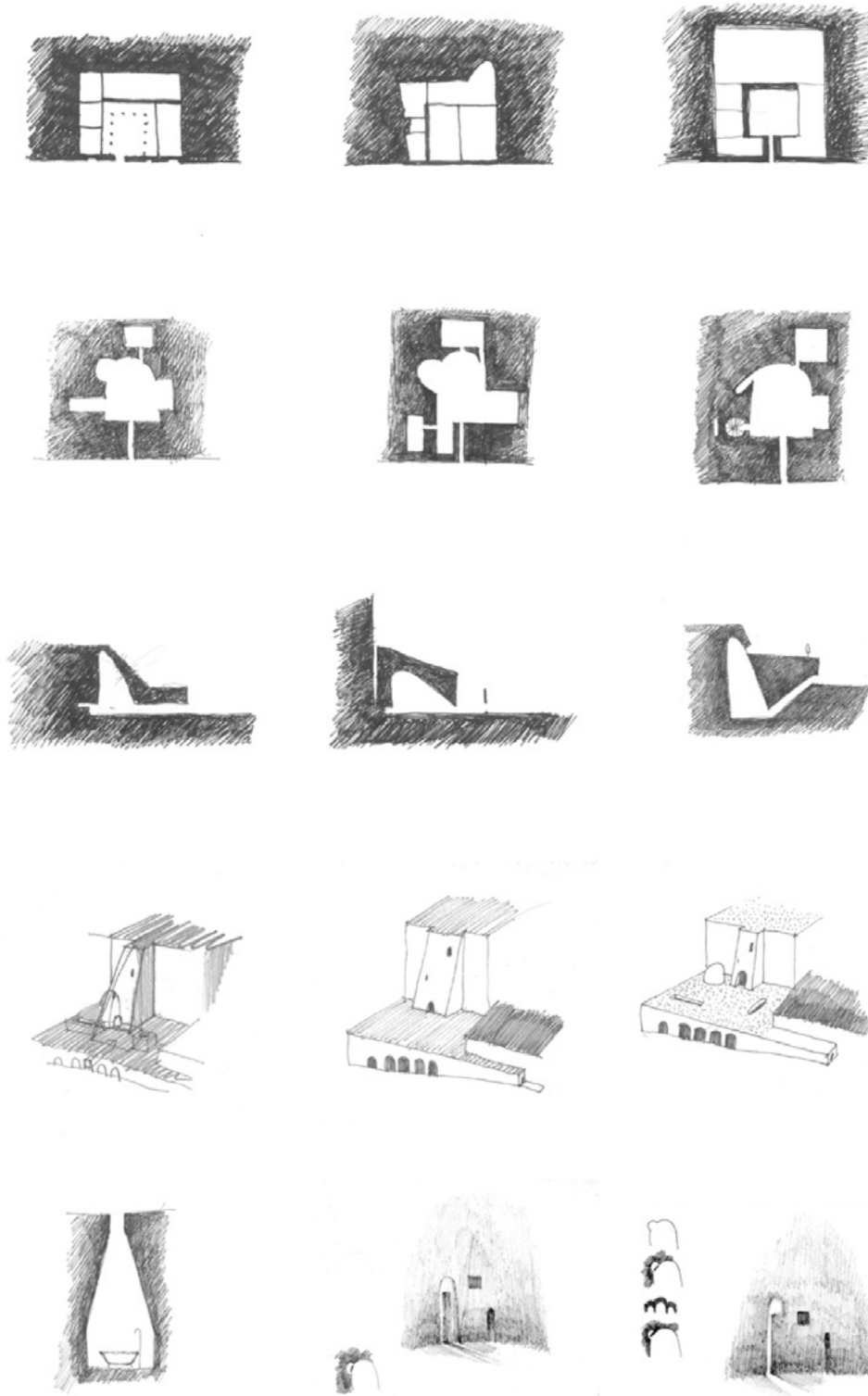
The institution or the person who collects records and artifacts gives voice to an archive. The decisions of including certain elements or not are crucial. Personal memories, methods and attitude form a collection. Some of these collections are subjective and researchers who work on the archive have also to make decisions of a different character. They have to decide how to interpret the archival documents and how to create a story based on them. The power of the archive is unlimited. It has political power and the power of resistance. The political, social and

economic conditions influence the collection and give its own context and voice. The terminology used in documents affects the tune and meaning of the fact. For example, the word “archive” has different meanings: the space, the building that contains information, it has strict regulations from working hours to the level of openness; the location and accessibility also imposes restrictions and the collection of documents itself. Thus, the way someone choose objects or facts organizes collective memory and each person reads this information differently. So, as the great architectural theorist Anthony Vidler, who was one of the interviewees of the course, said that it is important to realize that to assume that someone before you found everything and all the answers on the topic is absolutely impossible. The work on archive can never be stopped and you should be open to challenges, to search in the most unpredictable places and be ready to find pearls any time. The most important conclusion I can make is to always keep asking questions and try to understand the logic of existing archive to undermine the political power it has and to hear the multiple voices of documents. According to Anthony Vidler and Jacques Derrida, to whom Vidler refers, the passion of creating one’s own archive is forced by the desire to own things. This aspiration for collecting pictures, drawings (in the architectural context) and related texts gives birth, according to Vidler, to the “archive sickness”.

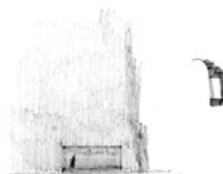
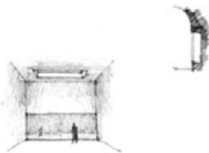
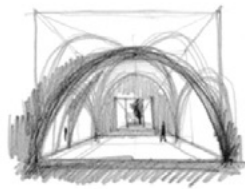
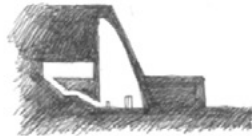
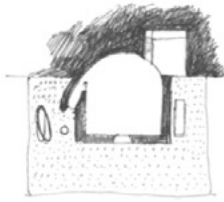
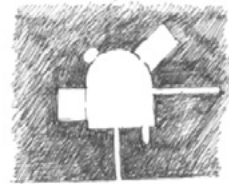
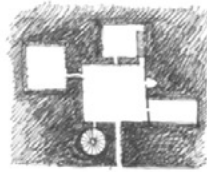
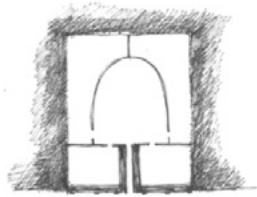
Archive is directly connected with memory and the way we collect and interpret collections. Through a repetitive return to the sources you can find new things every time and see the same idea in different perspectives. However, the repetition could be used not only in terms of returning to the theoretical source but aalso in the use of mechanical reproduction as a method of exploration, interpretation, translation and creation of iterations. I explored this method of repetitive interpretation of the painting with the Spring 2019 course, called “Second Nature 01: Landscape” by Mauricio Pezo, Sofía von Ellrichshausen and Diego Perez. The course was based on meditation and slowing down the way we live nowadays.

This method of repetitive mechanical reproduction took place as well in my Lisbon project. The search for the spaces' images were made through drawings. The number of sketches counted in is in the tens. Even little changes between iterations brought significant accuracy in the decisions. Each story was directed with a person as a main character in the space. Drawings helped to find the human scale in each room and relationships between the space and the person. The clay models explored the excavating nature of the project and at the same time other clay models were devoted to the "negative" space sculpture. This pursuit of forms and relationships between spaces continued in a big final model that was made for testing real physical spaces and light in the project.

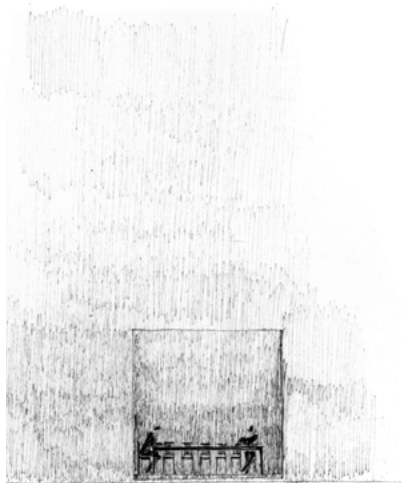
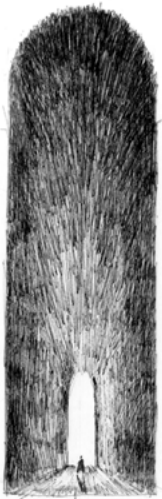
The two terms "memory" and "repetition" that went through my whole year are very related to each other. Both methods that I described earlier address the potential of the past to create the future. I strongly believe that everything we produce could be done only from the knowledge and experience we already have. Repeated access to memory, to the same sources, and hand-made repetition can bring new results every time.



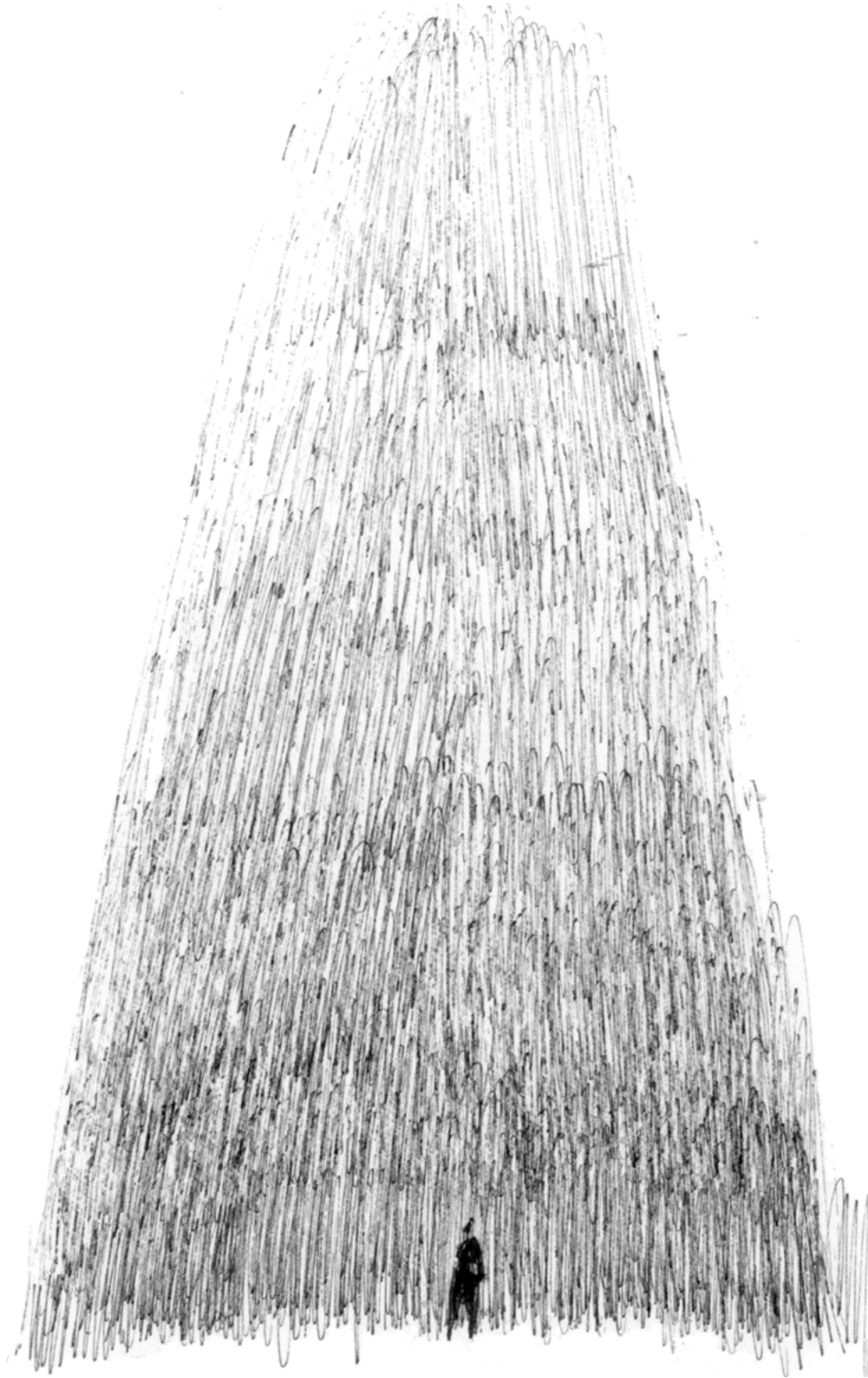
Sketches as a form of repetitive search



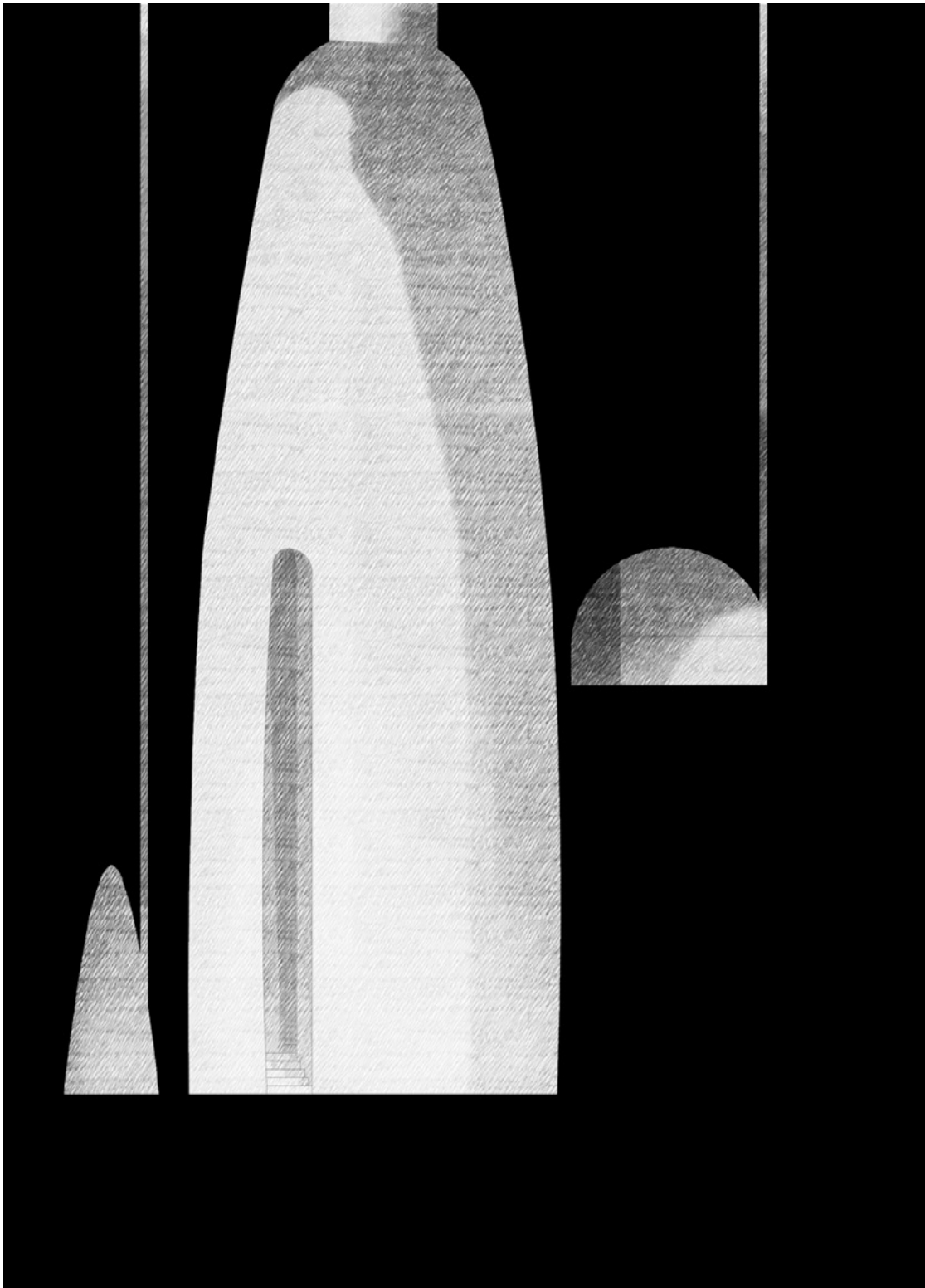
Sketches as a form of repetitive search



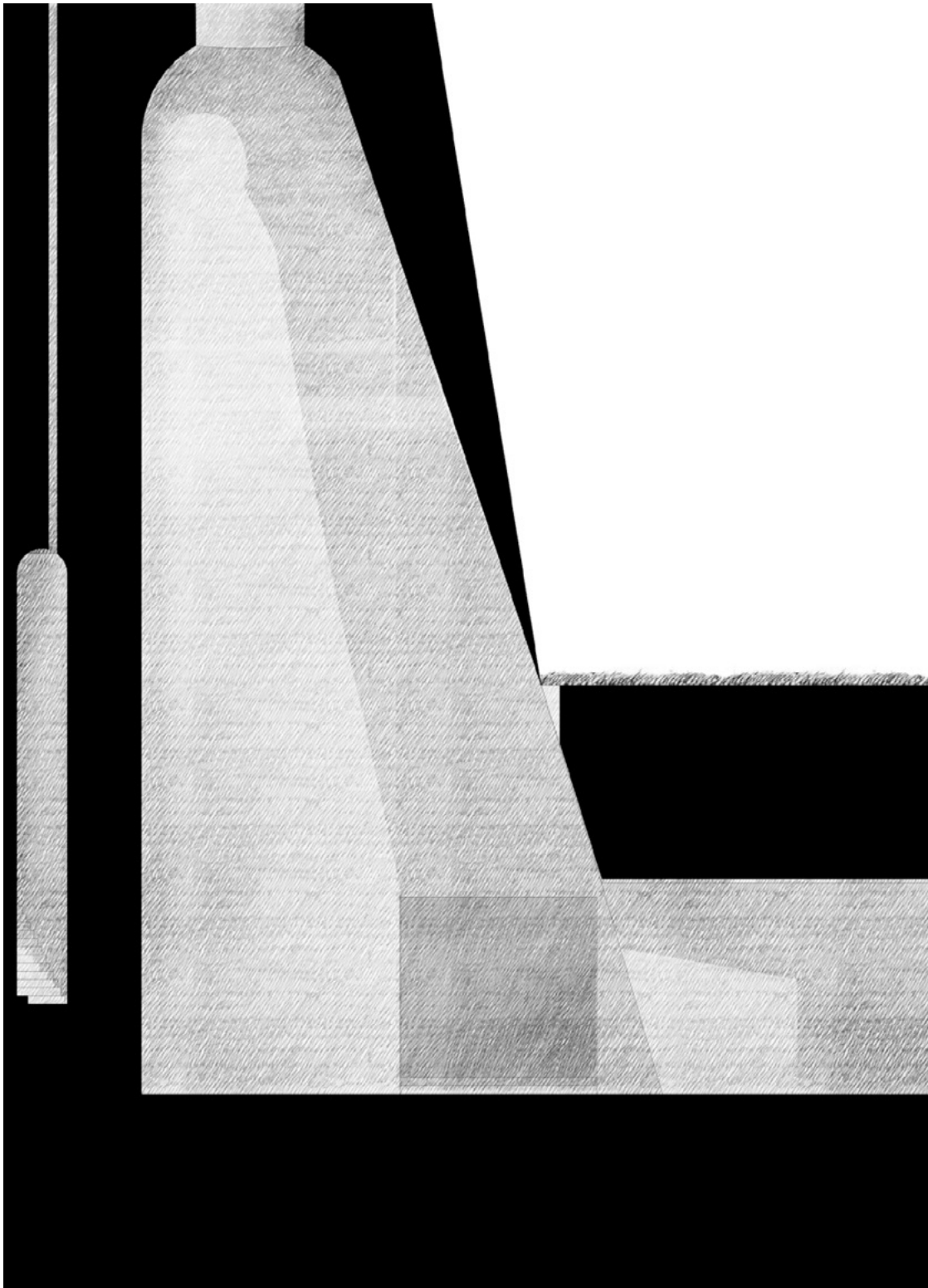
Spaces: to enter, to read, to wash to eat, to sleep



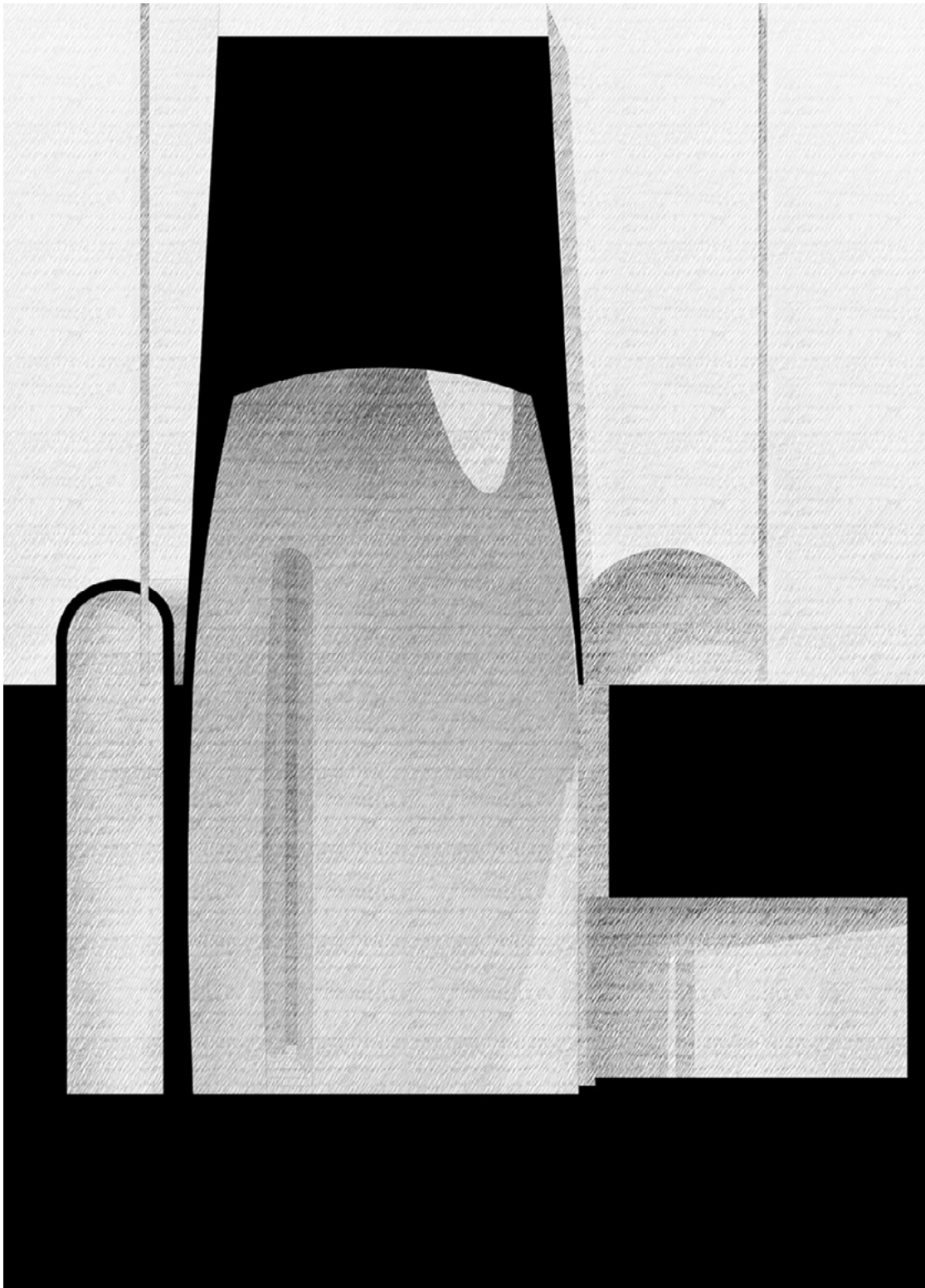
Space to gather



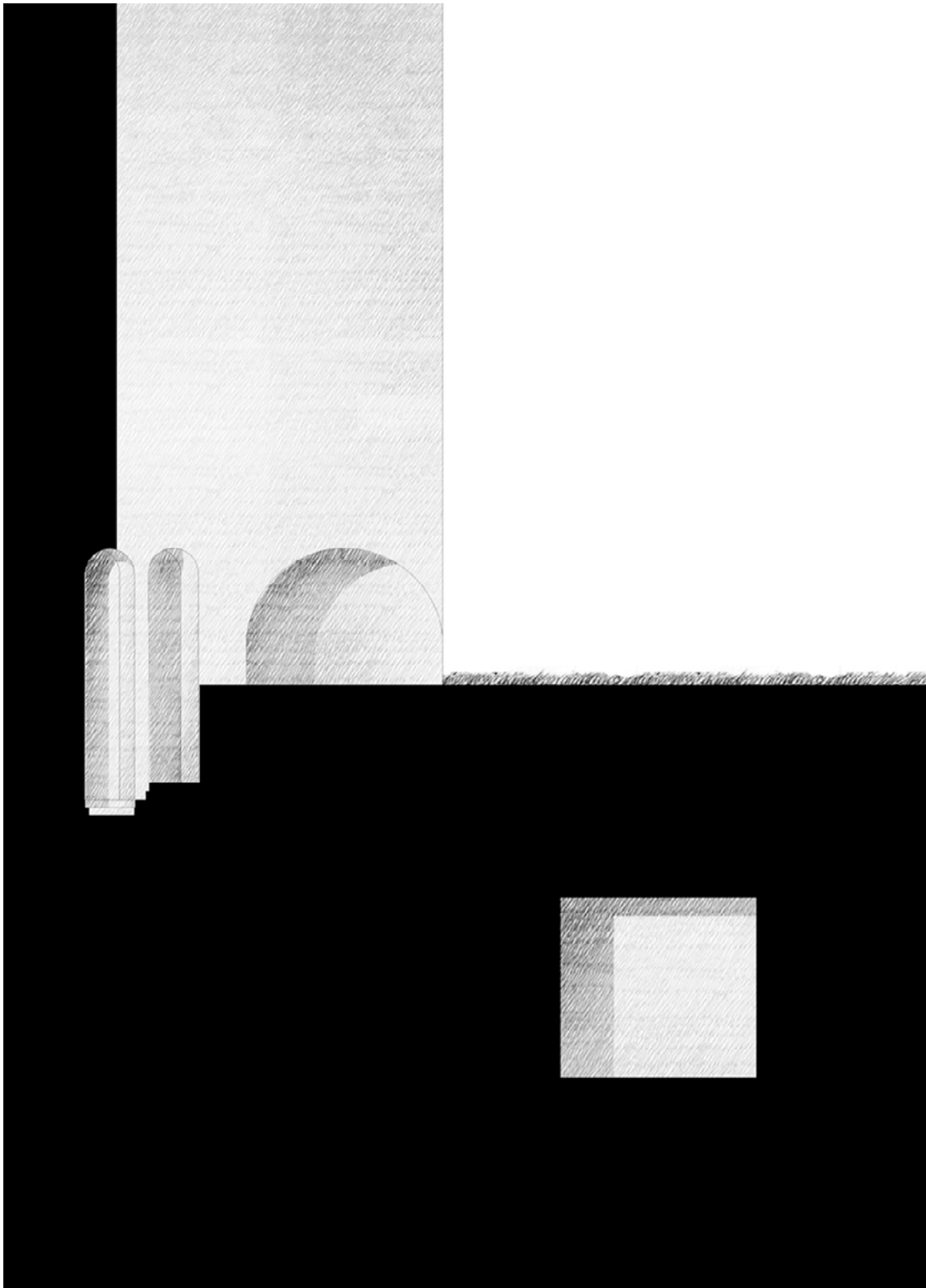
Section 1



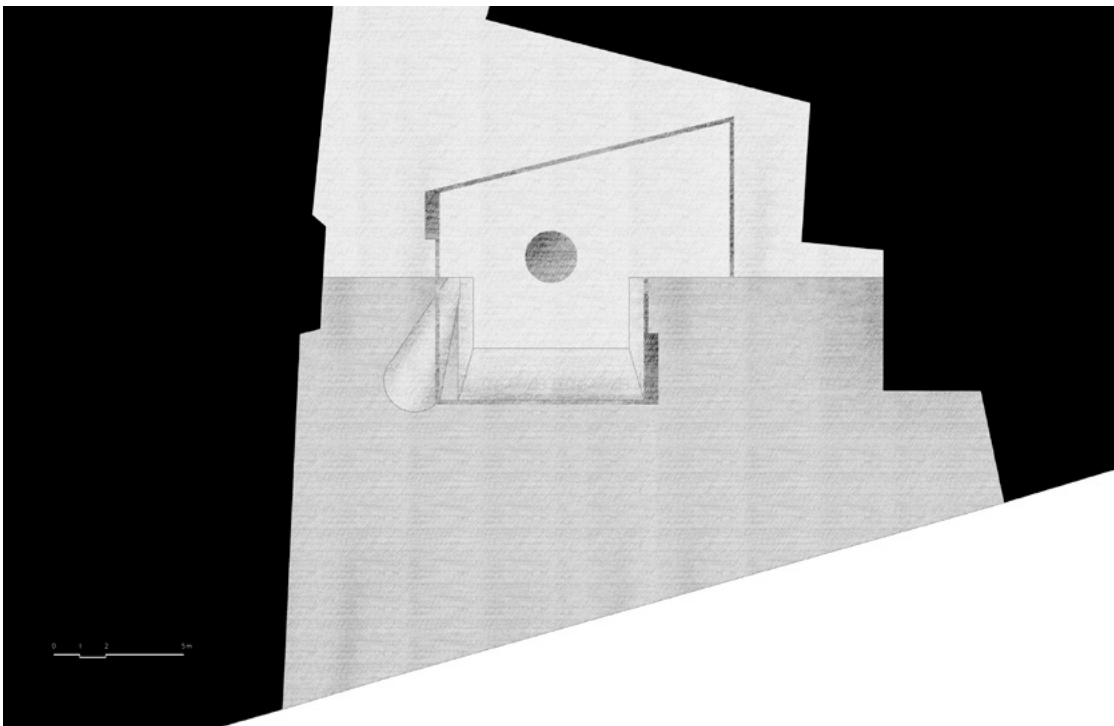
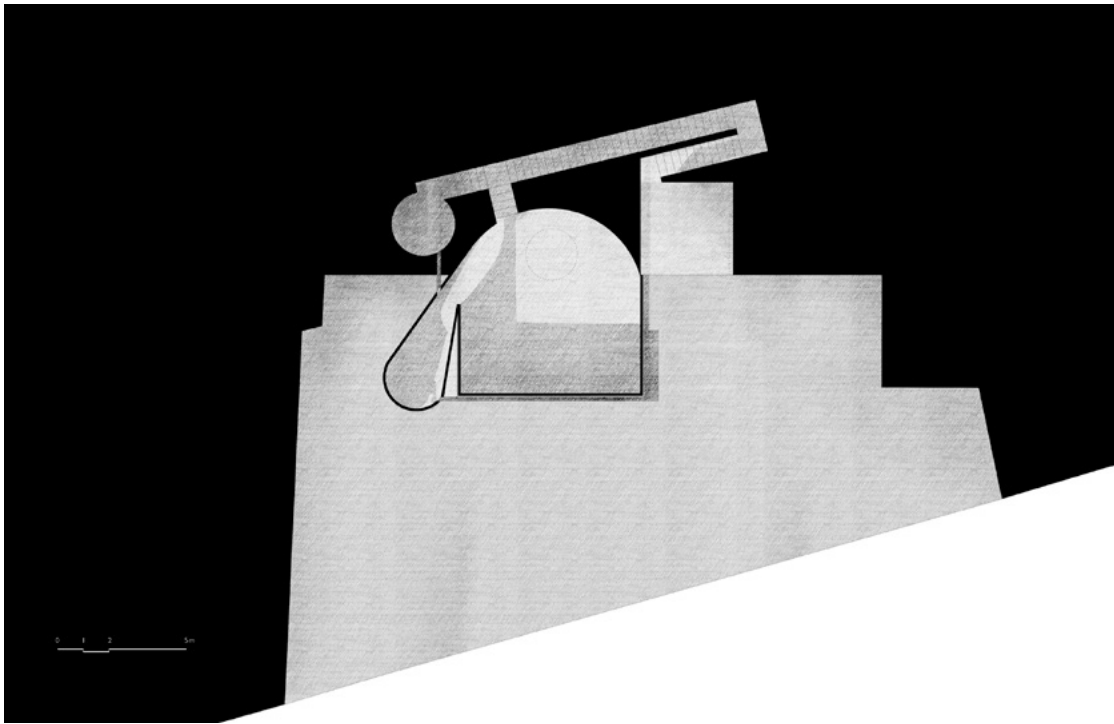
Section A



Section 2



Section B

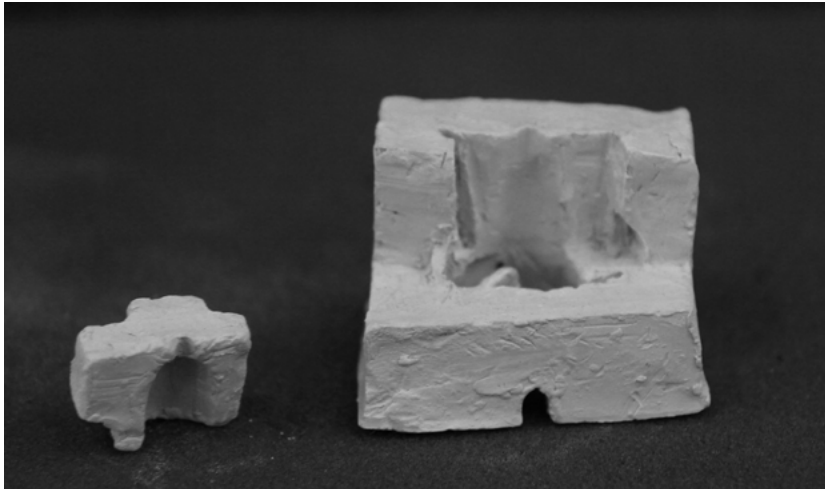


Plans



Ground floor plan

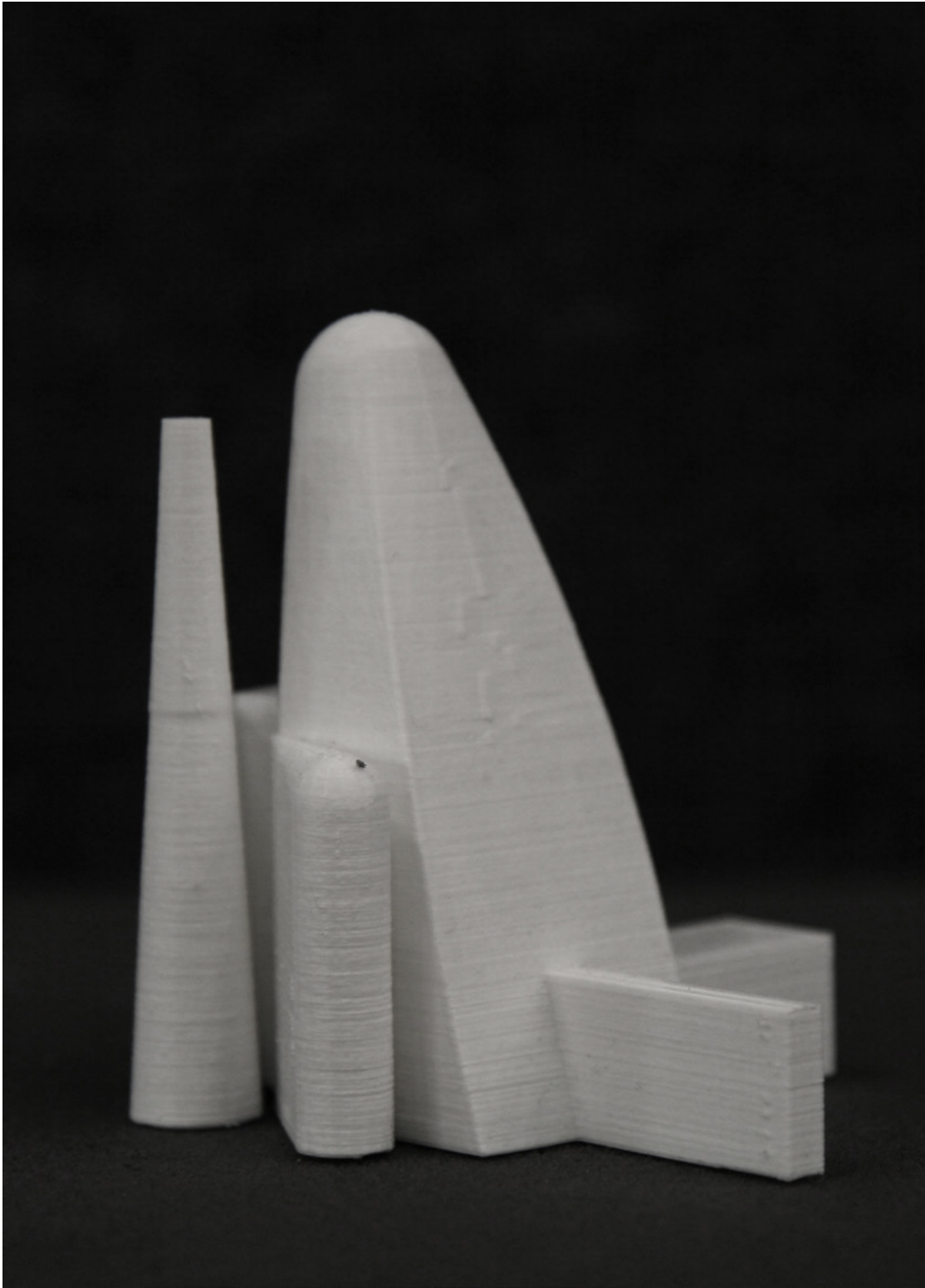
Hidden Villa. Fall 2018 project studio by Manuel Aires Mateus and Rodolfo Dias



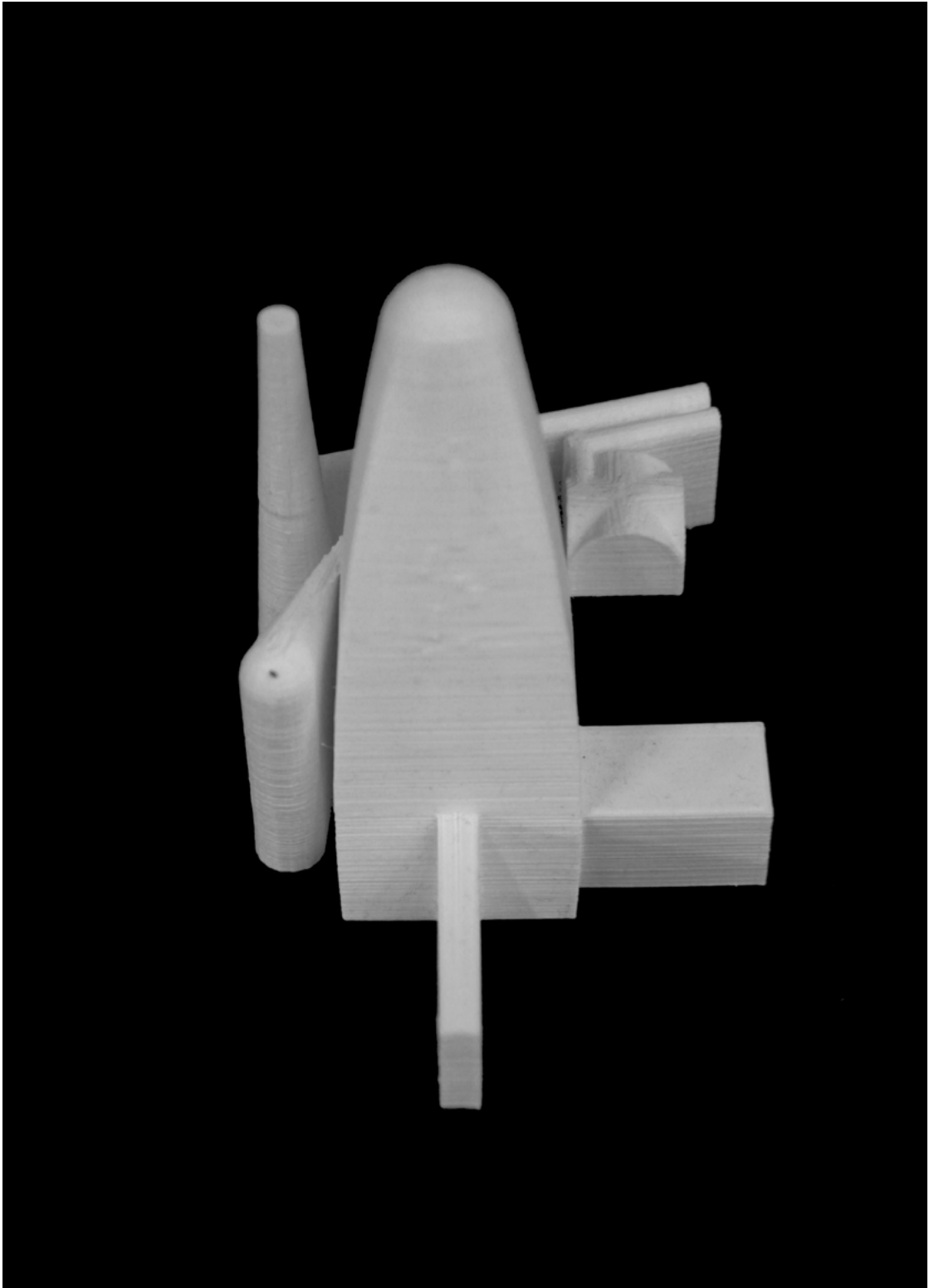
Clay models as a form of repetitive search



Final model. 1:20 scale

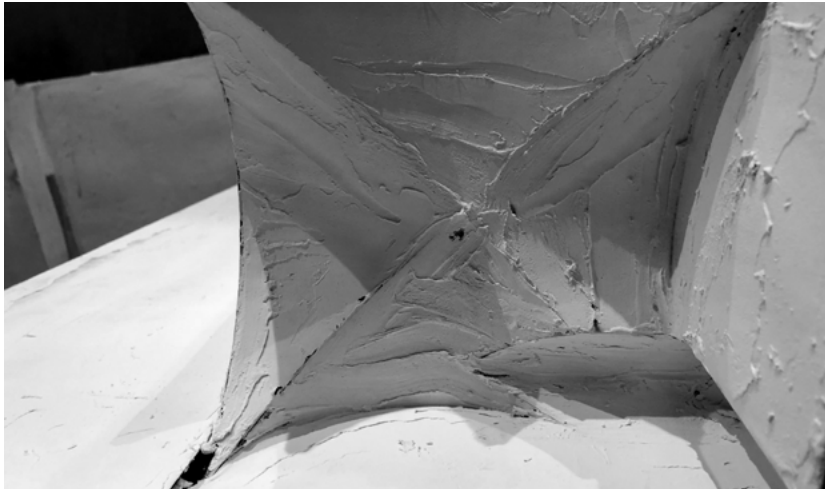


"Negative" space sculpture. 3D-printed model



"Negative" space sculpture. 3D-printed model

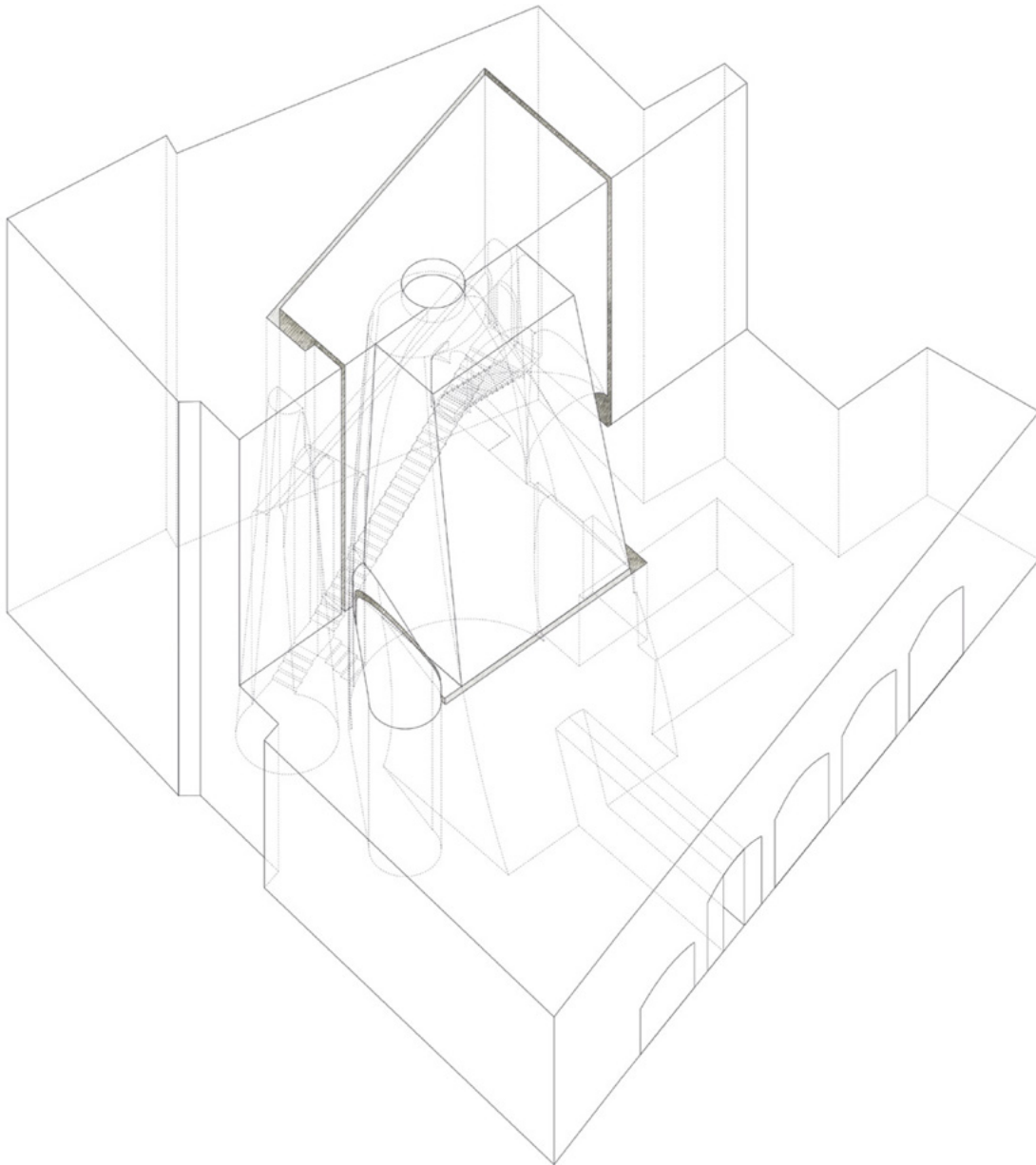
Hidden Villa. Fall 2018 project studio by Manuel Aires Mateus and Rodolfo Dias



Final model. 1:20 scale



Final model. 1:20 scale



Axonometric view



Final model. 1:20 scale



Claude Lorrain, View of La Crescenza, oil on canvas, 38.7×58.1 cm, 1650

Spring 2019. Second Nature 01: Landscape course by Mauricio Pezo, Sofía von Ellrichshausen, Diego Perez



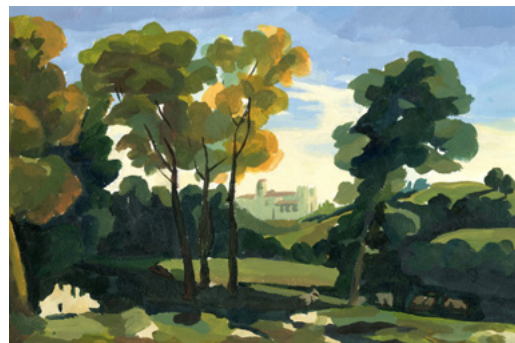
Interpretation, acrylic on paper, 59.4×84.1 cm, 2019

Spring 2019. Second Nature 01: Landscape course by Mauricio Pezo, Sofía von Ellrichshausen, Diego Perez



Mechanical repetition and interpretations

Spring 2019. Second Nature 01: Landscape course by Mauricio Pezo, Sofía von Ellrichshausen, Diego Perez



Mechanical repetition and interpretations

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